

Random Encounters

The Twisted Wood - Hollow

By Jeff Quick



Hollow

When he turned to corruption, Szorlog needed lieutenants to do his bidding. His wolf animal companions were available, so using procedures learned from the evil trapped beneath him, he skinned them and turned them into undead minions known as hollow dogs. Szorlog's hollow dogs roam the Twisted Wood as his mobile watchers and advanced attack units. He even sends them outside the wood occasionally to places where the treant would dare not send his awakened trees.

Below is the template for creating a hollow creature. An example of Szorlog's hollow dogs follows.

Hollow

Hollow creatures are the skins of natural creatures that are flayed and sewn back together with the creature's insides. The remains are then burned on a desecrated pyre. The disconnected spirit of the creature finds itself forced to stay with the remains of its body. After animating the skin, a newly hollowed creature seeks to refill its insides with the flesh of any other living creature that it can tear apart and stuff into its maw.

Creating a Hollow

"Hollow" is a template that can be added to any animal, beast, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid (hereafter referred to as the "base creature"). The creature's type changes to undead. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increased to d12.

Speed: Because of a hollow creature's unnaturally light weight, it gains 20 feet to its land speed.

Special Attacks: A hollow creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

Hungry Moan (Su): At will, a hollow creature can funnel wind through its skin, which creates a low moan that frightens and dulls the senses of all who hear it. Every living creature within 120 feet that hears it must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + one-half hollow creature's nonclass Hit Dice + hollow creature's Charisma modifier) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d6 rounds. This effect is a sonic and mind-affecting.

Maddening Howl (Su): When a hollow creature pitches the sound differently, it drives any creature within a 60-foot cone that fails a Will save (DC 10 + one-half hollow creature's nonclass Hit Dice + hollow creature's Charisma modifier) to madness, dealing 2d4 points of Wisdom damage. This is a sonic effect.

Special Qualities: A hollow creature has all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the undead type. In addition, it gains the following ability:

Livesense (Su): A hollow creature can sense living creatures within 120 feet regardless of concealment or cover behind unliving objects. Livesense allows a hollow creature to sense only the basic shape and outline of a living target. It cannot differentiate between two creatures with the same basic build, as with sight. Smaller creatures can take cover behind larger ones to hide from livesense. Hollow creatures cannot track with livesense.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: A hollow creature gains +4 to Strength and Dexterity. Being undead, it has no Constitution score.

Skills: Same as the base creature.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground.

Organization: Same as the base creature.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Always evil (any).

Advancement: Same as the base creature.

Sample Hollow Creature

This example uses a wolf as the base creature.

Hollow Dog

Medium-Size Undead

Hit Dice: 2d12 (13 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 70 ft.

AC: 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 12

Attacks: Bite +5 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6+4

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Hungry moan, maddening howl, trip

Special Qualities: Livesense, low-light vision, scent, undead traits

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 19, Con --, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills: Hide +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +1*

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3-6)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement Range: 3 HD (Medium-size); 4-5 HD (Large)



Hollow dogs are the skins of wolves, coyotes, and other wild dogs. The animals are skinned and their innards are burned on a desecrated pyre, trapping their spirits in their skins. The skins are then sewn up into the shape of the dog, and their spirits animate the hollow skins.

Combat

Hollow dogs are restless and hungry. They seek out living things with meat on them in an attempt to devour their innards. After they rip off chunks of a living creature, however, the meat falls out the seams and through the feet in a grisly trail.

Trip (Ex): A hollow dog that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the hollow dog.

Hungry Moan (Su): At will, a hollow dog can funnel wind through its skin, which creates a low moan that frightens and dulls the senses of all who hear it. Every living creature within 120 feet that hears it must succeed at a Will save (DC 9) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d6 rounds. This ability is a sonic, mind-affecting effect.

Maddening Howl (Su): When a hollow dog pitches the sound differently, it drives any creature within a 60-foot cone that fails a Will save (DC 9) to madness, dealing 2d4 points of Wisdom damage. This is a sonic effect.

Livesense (Su): A hollow dog can sense living creatures within 120 feet regardless of concealment or cover behind unliving objects. Livesense allows a hollow creature to sense only the basic shape and outline of a living target. It cannot differentiate between two creatures with the same basic build, as with sight. Smaller creatures can take cover behind larger ones to hide from livesense. Hollow creatures cannot track with livesense.

Scent (Ex): A hollow dog can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell. **Undead Traits:** A hollow dog is immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death, effects, necromantic effects, mind-affecting effects, and any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. Negative energy heals it, and it is not at risk of death from massive damage, but it is destroyed at 0 hit points or less. A hollow dog has darkvision (60-foot range). It cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing.

Skills: *A hollow dog receives a +4 racial bonus on Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.

Bringing the Parts Together

Perhaps the PCs first encounter the hollow dogs while passing outside the area. If they defeat the creatures, the PCs can track the dogs back into the wood.

Coming in Part 3 of the Twisted Wood

The film of night can leave its mark on those who anger the occupants of the Twisted Wood.

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